

ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

Annual Subscription: \$3.00

17, ROUTE DE MALAGNOU, GENEVA
297 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 10
Tel.: GRamercy 5-3475 — Cable Address: "Worcil"

Printed in the U. S. A.

under the auspices of
the WORLD COUNCIL of CHURCHES (in process of formation)
the INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL
the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES
the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
the WORLD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

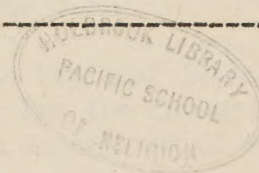
The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 8

Fifteenth Year

February 27, 1948

Amsterdam Special



When the Amsterdam Assembly Opens.-

When the Amsterdam Assembly opens next August not only will key-note addresses and ground-laying presentations be made in the first two days, but the Assembly will also see and hear some of the outstanding leaders of the ecumenical movement and those who have been in the heart of the development process of the World Council of Churches.

At the opening service in the New Church, the Cathedral of Holland, on Sunday afternoon, August 22nd, messages will be heard from the Rev. D.T. Niles, and from Dr John R. Mott. Dr John R. Mott, Nobel Prize-winner, will make his one hundred and tenth trip across the Atlantic to participate. From the days when he organised the World's Student Christian Federation in 1895, Dr Mott has given himself with abandon to Christian world movements, which have played such an important part in bringing us to this stage of ecumenical development. Mr. Niles, of Ceylon, is one of the Chairman of the World Council Youth Department; he is an evangelist in that country and took prominent part in the Madras Conference of 1938, and in the World Conferences of Christian Youth in Amsterdam 1939 and Oslo 1947.

The five Presidents of the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches, Dr Marc Boegner, of France, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop of Upsala, Sweden, the Archbishop of Thyateira, now stationed in England, and Dr John R. Mott, of the United States, will have part in this significant opening service.

On the evening of the same day, the first plenary session will be held. Archbishop Eidem, of Upsala, one of the six Presidents of the Oxford Conference on Life and Work, will preside. Speakers will be the Bishop of Chichester, Dr G. Bell, Bishop Brillioth, of Sweden, Dr Marc Boegner, President of the French Protestant Federation, and President of the Administrative Committee of the Provisional Committee, and Dr John A. Mackay, President of Princeton University, United States. They will address themselves to the subject "How God has led us".

Before the Assembly begins to discuss the study materials which have for so long been in preparation, another day will be given to plenary sessions. Dr W.A. Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, will present the important report on "Policy", prepared by the Provisional Committee. Dr Smanuel McCrea Cavert, Chairman of the Committee on Arrangements, will present the programme of the Assembly, with interpretations.

Two addresses by world-known Biblical scholars will highlight this second day. Dr Karl Barth, Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Basle, will discuss the theme of the Assembly, "Man's Disorder and God's Design". Dr C.H. Dodd, Professor of Divinity at the University of Cambridge, will address himself to the subject of the Biblical basis of the issue which will be discussed at the Assembly.

E.P.S. Geneva

Death of Dr Ralph H. Long

Dr Ralph H. Long, Executive Secretary of the National Lutheran Council in America, has passed away. His death is a hard blow for the Lutheran Churches of the United States as well as for the World Lutheran Federation of which Dr Long was the treasurer.

Dr Long had been chosen to represent his Church - the American Lutheran Church - at the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam. He will be missed as a man who showed a deep interest in the matter of cooperation with other Churches and who has been one of the main servants of the cause of church-reconstruction in war-devastated countries.

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

The Churches and the Bill of Rights

"Churches must play an effective part in creating public opinion that will demand the world-wide recognition of an International Bill of Rights". Dr O.F. Nolde, director of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs and consultant to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (see E.P.S. No. 47, 1947) declared at a service of ecumenical worship opening the 26th annual Convention of the International Council of Religious Education at Grand Rapids, Mich., on February 9, 1948.

Asserting that the Bill of Rights venture now under way "has no precedent in the history of mankind", Dr Nolde challenged American Churches to take the lead in convincing all governments "of the importance of achieving a common world of understanding as to the place which man should rightfully hold in society".

Christians should concentrate their efforts in the sphere of human rights on provision for religious freedom and closely-related rights, because "they have a special competence in this area... In the face of totalitarian pressures, it is important that the right of conscience and its expression be inclusively safeguarded," Dr Nolde asserted, describing the proposed United Nations articles on freedom of conscience and belief as "reasonably satisfactory". They correspond closely to the recommendations submitted by the Churches' Commission and have been found acceptable by numerous religious and secular agencies.

E.P.S. Geneva

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

CZECHOSLOVAKIAInter-Church Cooperation

The Peace manifestation held in Prague on February 2, (see E.P.S. No.5) has had important consequences. For the first time for centuries all Christian Churches in Czechoslovakia joined in a common action and for the first time in history the Roman Catholic Church in that country consulted the other Churches and acted with them as equal.

There are already signs that the manifestation means a start to an inter-Church cooperation in Czechoslovakia. According to the "Kostnické Jiskry" an article appeared in the prominent Czech religious newspaper, "Křestanské Review" in which a Protestant minister pleads for a similar church cooperation as was manifested in the defence against Nazi ideology and regime. The Roman Catholic newspaper "Vysehrad" has now made a favourable reply suggesting that an inter-church and unpolitical body should be formed, a council for the protection of religious life and rights. The main task of this body - which should include not only all Christian Churches but also the Jews - would be the observation of public life in the state and the reaction against all that endangers religion and moral life and the defence of religious freedom to confess faith in God. This body should act in an advisory capacity, as a centre of information and initiative but it should not represent the Churches before the State.

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANYTen Thousand Laymen in Training as Religious Instructors

In many areas of Germany today the Churches have lost former privileges - confessional schools have disappeared and religious instruction has been eliminated from the school curriculum. This situation is considered by many churchmen to be disastrous, coming as it does after years of systematic exclusion of Christian teaching from German education by the Nazis.

For other churchmen, however, the situation has come as a challenge and an opportunity. Their response, daring in conception, is expressed in the so-called "Catechetenarbeit" programme. This programme, which began to operate in May 1947, aims at training ten thousand lay religious instructors in a period of two years. These instructors, or catechists, will undertake the training of children in Christian faith and practice under the direct supervision of the Church.

The organisation of this programme is chiefly carried out by the Religious Training Officers of the Provincial Churches (Landeskirchen). In each church district, training centres have been established where courses of three months' duration are held, covering such subjects as Bible knowledge, Christian doctrine, church history, child psychology and pedagogics. Special attention is paid to personal Christian witness in the setting of the Christian community, thus carrying on the tradition established in the days of the "Kirchenkampf". At the conclusion of the training period, searching examinations are held.

During 1947, some 2,500 catechists were trained, and the process is gathering impetus. It is already noticeable that the children are more intimately connected with the Church than under the old system of religious teaching.

The catechists themselves are finding an intense satisfaction in the new sense of responsibility and especially of community gained in this joint adventure. Thus laymen are increasingly performing vital spiritual functions.

The programme is directly supported by the "Evangelisches Hilfswerk" and the World Council of Churches, through whose agencies come financial help and supplies of supplementary foodstuffs and of literature for the conduct of courses and the instruction of the children.

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANY

Cooperation Between the EKD and the Free Churches

In October last year the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) arranged a meeting and invited representatives from the following Christian Churches; the Evangelical Church in Germany, the League of Evangelical Free Churches, the Episcopal Methodist Church, the Evangelical Fellowship, the League of Free Evangelical Churches, the Union of German Mennonite Communities, the Old Catholic Church. The aim of this meeting was, through fraternal discussion, to reach agreement concerning the formation of a definite Church union and to draw up a programme for it (see E.P.S. No. 39, 1947).

A second discussion took place at Frankfurt-on-Main in December 1947, and prepared the draft statutes, which have since been presented to the Churches for their acceptance. The most important points in these statutes are as follows: The different Churches, which recognise Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, are uniting in the "Union of German Churches" (Arbeitsgemeinschaft christlicher Kirchen in Deutschland). The condition for membership is acceptance of the above-mentioned Basis. Members will be restricted to those Churches which have legal standing. Members will retain their full independence in confession and doctrine, in their form of service and in their legal order, and in looking after their own interests. In so doing they will show brotherly consideration for the legitimate concerns of the other members of the "Church Union".

The "Church Union wishes to help in the fulfilment of the following tasks: the fostering of ecumenical relations and ecumenical work among its members; the promotion of theological discussion among the members for the purpose of clarification and understanding; advice and negotiation in cases where differences arise between members; support of special concerns of members, at their request; representation of mutual concerns and publicity in non-church circles.

The Evangelical Church in Germany sends five representatives to the meetings of the "Church Union", the League of Evangelical Free Churches two and the other members one representative each.

E.P.S. Geneva

KOREA

A New Christian Daily Newspaper

A new daily newspaper, edited by Syn Yung-Chul, a Presbyterian, has begun publication in Seoul. Its initial circulation was 10,000 copies. The "Syn Min Ilbo" (Independence News) will "work for higher economic, cultural and educational levels for the common people" and for this aim "will need to be characterised by inner spiritual strength". The paper was started because existing dailies in Korea serve merely as organs of political parties.

E.P.S. Geneva

dated independent station, has presented Dr. Winfield Burgress

in "NEWS FOR THOUGHT". A copy of Dr. Burgress's talk may be

secured by writing to him at care of your local station.

Your announcer is George Hays, this is ABC - the American Broad-

casting Company.

At this time the American Broadcasting Company presents "NEWS FOR

THOUGHT" by Dr. Winfield Burgress.

Dr. Burgress.

THE AMERICAN BROADCASTING COMPANY

The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, in co-

operation with the American Broadcasting Company, and with the

in "NEWS FOR THOUGHT". A copy of Dr. Burgress's talk may be

secured by writing to him at care of your local station.

Your announcer is George Hays, this is ABC - the American Broad-

casting Company.

At this time the American Broadcasting Company presents "NEWS FOR

THOUGHT" by Dr. Winfield Burgress.

Dr. Burgress.

THE AMERICAN BROADCASTING COMPANY

A new Christian Daily Newspaper

The American Broadcasting Company, in co-

operation with the American Broadcasting Company, and with the

in "NEWS FOR THOUGHT". A copy of Dr. Burgress's talk may be

PHILIPPINE ISLANDSMeeting of the Joint Commission on East Asia in
Manila

At the Whitby Conference of the International Missionary Council in July 1947, the delegates from East Asia spent a day in consultation on their particular problems and special needs, as a result of which it was decided to set up a Joint Commission of the I.M.C. and the World Council of Churches representing India, the Philippines, China, Japan and Korea with one delegate each and Ceylon, Burma, Malaya, Siam and Indonesia having correspondent status.

When the Commission assembled in Manila, February 4-7, 1948 (see E.P.S. No. 7) no Japanese delegate could be present. However, unexpectedly Siam was represented and Indonesia by observers in addition to the above-mentioned countries. Some of the delegates had been at Whitby, thereby insuring continuity with that meeting.

Plans were made for an East Asia Conference to be held at the end of 1948 or early 1949. It was decided that the Churches and Councils in East Asia should be informed regarding the functions of the I.M.C. and the World Council and their mutual relations, and that they should be consulted concerning the possibility of establishing a joint office of the I.M.C. and the World Council in Eastern Asia. In cooperation and consultation with the two organisations, plans were made for some members of the Commission to visit the Churches and Councils in Eastern Asia, for purposes of counsel and encouragement.

Such important matters as regionalism, an oriental Youth Conference, and exchange of staff teaching in Christian schools were discussed.

The meeting decided to send a cable message to the National Christian Council of India on the untimely death of Mahatma Gandhi. The report that Australia and New Zealand are included in the membership and plans of the Joint Commission was well received. The meeting expressed the hope "that every just means be used to secure the attendance of Japanese representatives" at the various ecumenical gatherings to be held in 1948. The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (sponsored by the I.M.C. and the World Council) is asked to pay special attention to the peace treaty with Japan, so important for the life of the Churches in East Asia.

An East Asia Conference of approximately fifty delegates at Hangchow in October 1949 will be held to consider how the world-wide Christian fellowship might be strengthened by the fuller participation of the Churches in Eastern Asia in the life of the Ecumenical Church. At this Conference ways of developing the sense of interdependence among the Younger Churches in Eastern Asia would be examined, and their experience pooled, including visitation, exchange of staff, circulation of literature and periodical conferences. The major problems of the Christian enterprise in Eastern Asia will be studied. The Conference will also examine the question of establishing a joint office of the I.M.C. and the World Council of Churches in Eastern Asia, and the relationship of that office to the existing National Christian Councils, to member-Churches of the World Council and to the other offices of the I.M.C. and the W.C.C. The Conference will also consider ways in which the Christian Churches in Eastern Asia might cooperate effectively with the Churches' Commission on International Affairs, for the promotion of world order and peace.

The meeting recommended to the parent bodies that a joint secretariat of the I.M.C. and the World Council be established beginning January 1950, at a place to be determined. It is to be on a three years experimental basis. Arrangements were made for the commissioners to visit as far as possible the various regions.

After the Conference, the Commission was received by President Roxas. Members of the Commission then filled a number of speaking engagements in various parts of the Islands, thereby making visible the fellowship of the Younger Churches and stimulating Christian unity in East Asia.

E.P.S. Geneva

INDIA

Asiatic Christians on Gandhi's

Death

The Conference of the Joint Commission of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches sent the following message to the National Christian Council of India;

"Christian representatives from China, Korea, Siam, the Philippines, Indonesia and India, meeting in Manila with officials of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches, deplore the assassination of Gandhi and mourn with India the death of one of the greatest souls of our time. They pray God to restore to India the communal harmony for which Gandhi gave his life, and urge the Indian Christian community to exercise a ministry of reconciliation and unselfish service."

E.P.S. Geneva

CHINA

Missionaries in Civil War Areas

The representatives of various missionary societies in Shanghai have denied the rumours that mission-work in the Central Provinces of China has ceased and that all the missionaries have been obliged to evacuate their posts owing to the civil war. They report that for instance the work of the China Inland Mission, the Baptist Mission, the Society of Friends, and others, is still carrying on. In certain cases women with small children and older people have been urged to leave for a place of greater safety.

The Rev. B.J. Gauthen of the Southern Baptist Mission summed up the situation by saying that missions recognise a wide emergency exists and that chaotic conditions can be expected for some time to come. So far, he said, the Baptists had suffered no losses either in personnel or property. Those who elect to stay in danger spots do so from "deep personal conviction". "We place the burden of proof on them, he said, we warn them that they must be physically prepared for hardship and of course that they must be spiritually prepared."

The Rev. R.E. Thompson of the China Inland Mission said that some missionaries are completely isolated at Yencheng, in Honan. Yencheng has been cut by the Communists. However a letter written early in December reported that they are all carrying on their work within the compound in a limited way. The Communists have not molested them and allow the towns people to come to the compound.

In southwest Honan, at Hse Che Chen, where a rural centre has been carried on by the China Inland Mission for many years, the missionaries are carrying on

Bible classes and work with women and children within the compound. At Kaifeng, where the same Mission has its largest hospital, a relatively large group has remained, reluctant to abandon work at a time when the city is packed with refugees. Church and school work is also continuing. Despite the fact that Kaifeng is now virtually encircled by the Communists, the missionaries stay on because of the "great evidence of opportunity".

Another group is the Friends Service Unit at Chengmou, near Kaifeng. Their story reveals the complexity of the situation in which the missionaries find themselves. When the Communists moved in, a long series of "negotiations" ensued. At Chungmou, the Unit, in a general effort to aid in the rehabilitation of the town, has established a brick-making cooperative and various handicraft cooperatives, and has built a hospital. At nearby Shih Li-tou, they set up an agricultural experiment station. On the very day the Communists arrived, Friends' workers streamed in from Shih Li-tou to report that the Communists had taken everything - animals, food stocks, supplies. The place was stripped bare.

One of the missionaries agreed to give the Communists a supply of drugs from the hospital. When he arrived, he found supplies and drugs of all sorts already being loaded into trucks. He ordered the soldiers to hand them back. Astonishingly, they did. He then kept his promise and gave them a stock of drugs. The unit is now carrying on its work as usual. E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

The Federal Council and the European Recovery Programme

The Federal Council of Churches is circulating a petition in support of the European Recovery Programme and expects "some 500 religious leaders" to sign it. The petition to be presented to Congress by March 1, hails European Recovery Programme as a programme which "can be one of history's most momentous affirmations of faith in the curative power of freedom and in the creative capacity of free men."

On March 11, at the Washington (D.C.) Cathedral, a service will be held in the interest of this plan. The Cathedral and the Washington Federal Council of Churches are cooperating with the Federal Council in sponsoring the service. Mr. John Foster Dulles and Bishop Angus Dun will speak. The Secretary of State Mr. George Marshall "has been invited to participate and has indicated his acceptance." E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

A Memorial Postage Stamp

A memorial postage stamp in honour of four Army chaplains, a Methodist, a Baptist, a Roman Catholic and a Jew, who lost their lives in World War II will be issued by the Post Office Department of the United States. The stamp will commemorate the four who went down with the sinking S. Dorchester when the transport was torpedoed in the North Atlantic in 1943. E.P.S. Geneva

Tribute to Dr J. Hutchison Cockburn

The Czech order of the White Lion has been awarded by President Benes to Dr J. Hutchison Cockburn, director of the Reconstruction Department of the World Council "in gratitude for the precious help given to Czechoslovakia and to the Czech Government in London during the war." E.P.S. Geneva

